INTERMOUNTAIN STATION
Central Reference File
No. 0.73

Research Note

NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN
FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATION

Missoula, Montana

No. 137

February 1954

MONTANA CHRISTMAS TREE SHIPMENTS AGAIN HIT 3-MILLION MARK IN 1953

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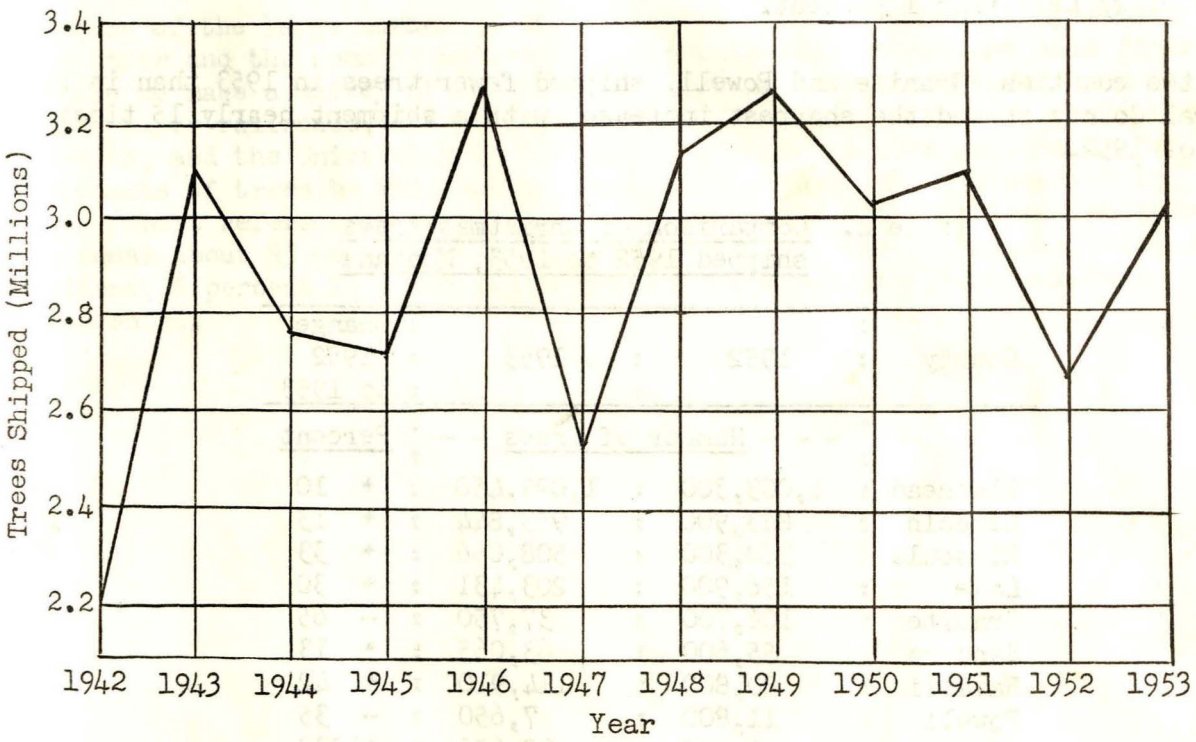
For the fifth time in the last 6 years, Montana's Christmas tree shipments totaled over 3 million trees. This is a 14-percent increase over 1952 and returns the industry to the general level of business existing from 1948 to 1951. The overall picture, however, continues to be characterized by wide fluctuations in tree shipments. These fluctuations are influenced by factors of climate; marketing and production; and biological factors including attacks by insects and disease, all equally unpredictable and each capable of upsetting the balance.

Figure 1. Montana Christmas tree shipments, 1942 to 1953



Flathead, Lincoln, and Missoula Counties provided 85 percent of the total Christmas trees shipped from Montana in 1953. Flathead continued to lead all counties, shipping 36 percent of the total.

Rail shipments of trees continued to exceed those by truck, but accounted for only 79 percent of the total export as compared with 90 percent in 1952.

Table 1. Total shipment of Christmas trees, Montana 1953

County	Rail shipments 1/	Truck shipments	Total	Percent
Flathead	874,000	225,450	1,099,450	36
Lincoln	869,250	84,594	953,844	32
Missoula	365,750	142,306	508,056	17
Lake	152,000	51,431	203,431	7
Granite	23,750	14,000	37,750	1
Sanders	42,750	20,315	63,065	2
Ravalli	38,000	76,910	114,910	4
Powell	-	7,650	7,650	2/
Mineral	23,750	6,875	30,625	1
Other	-	1,500	1,500	2/
Total	2,389,250	631,031	3,020,281	100
Percent of Total	79	21	100	

1/ Data from reports by the Northern Pacific, Great Northern, and Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railway Companies.
2/ Less than 1 percent.

Only two counties, Granite and Powell, shipped fewer trees in 1953 than in 1952. Mineral County showed the sharpest increase, with a shipment nearly 15 times that of 1952.

Table 2. Comparison of Christmas trees shipped 1952 to 1953, Montana

County	1952	1953	Change 1952 to 1953
	- - - Number of trees - - -		Percent
Flathead	1,003,300	1,099,450	+ 10
Lincoln	843,900	953,844	+ 13
Missoula	382,300	508,056	+ 33
Lake	156,900	203,431	+ 30
Granite	106,700	37,750	- 65
Sanders	55,600	63,065	+ 13
Ravalli	80,800	114,910	+ 42
Powell	11,800	7,650	- 35
Mineral	2,300	30,625	+1232
Other	1,000	1,500	+ 50
Total	2,644,600	3,020,281	+ 14

Christmas trees were shipped to 27 states and to Mexico from Montana in 1953. Largest importer of Montana trees was Texas, which displaced Iowa, the 1952 leader. Illinois, the perennial leader prior to 1951, slipped from third place in 1952 to fifth in 1953. One newcomer in the top ten importers was California in tenth place, displacing Indiana which dropped out of the leading group.

Table 3. Rail shipments to leading ten state markets for Montana Christmas trees

1953		1952	
State	Trees	State	Trees
Texas	351,500	Iowa	327,750
Iowa	342,000	Texas	313,500
Oklahoma	251,750	Illinois	275,500
Missouri	228,000	Missouri	242,250
Illinois	223,250	Kansas	204,250
Nebraska	213,750	Oklahoma	199,500
Kansas	209,000	Nebraska	147,250
Louisiana	90,250	Indiana	95,000
Minnesota	66,500	Louisiana	90,250
California	57,000	Minnesota	71,250
Total	2,033,000	Total	1,966,500

Because of the large number of Christmas tree producers operating within the State and the nomadic nature of their business, we are not able financially to make a survey of production. Instead we have depended upon the three major railroads, the Customs Service, the State Forester, the national forests, and the University of Montana to provide us with information on shipments of trees by rail and by truck. Therefore, the information in this report refers only to shipments of trees. We estimate these shipments to equal about 95 percent of total production of trees in Montana. The additional 5 percent is local use and truck shipments that have not been enumerated.